THE BUSINESS JOURNAL OF FILM, BROADCASTING, BROADBAND, PRODUCTION, DISTRIBUTION

DECEMBER 2009 VOL. 29 NO. 7 $9.75

MOVIE VIDEO·AGE international®

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Latin America's TV Buyers on $1.5 Billion Spree

By Dom Serafini

According to Nouriel Roubini, the New York University professor who gained prominence for predicting the global financial crisis, Latin America has been quick to make progress, with signs of economic upturn abounding, especially in Brazil. In fact, Roubini believes that recovery in emerging economies will outpace that of developed nations.

Televisa's Alberto Ciurana, Latin America's top buyer

It is with this spirit that *VideoAge* undertook a massive study to determine the key Latin American territories and the major program buyers in each territory. We were not concerned with the genre of programs acquired or the volume of programs purchased, but simply with the annual acquisition budget allocated to each TV outlet. These budgets excluded sports rights such as football, the Olympic

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ATF Spirit Is Buoyant, Biz Hopes For The Same

More than 550 buyers from 35 countries are expected to attend this year's 10th annual Asia Television Forum (ATF), taking place on December 2-4 at the Suntec Convention Centre in Singapore. Numbers are up from last year's edition, when some 300 buyer organizations were in attendance and U.S.$73.7 million worth of business was conducted by 286 exhibiting companies from 39 countries.

New to the market this year is the Italian pavilion, an umbrella stand organized by the Singapore office of the Italian Trade Commission that will house nine TV distribution companies, including Lux Vide and RaiTrade. This exhibition area will complement already-existing pavilions for

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NATPE 2010 Almost Booted The Booths

NATPE officials hadn't even finished announcing the virtual end of the exhibition booths on the convention floor era when some potential exhibitors began questioning aspects of the new suites market environment approach.

Additional news that caused both delight and irritation was the official announcement that NATPE

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Teutonic Screenings Expanding Reach and Buyers' Minds

Acquisition executives from all over the world will soon gather at Munich's Le Méridien to view over 100 hours of new programs at the 34th annual German Screenings, to be held November 29 through December 3.

Last year, this itinerant winter event — the oldest of such program fairs in Europe — took place in Hamburg. Next year, the Screenings will be held in Austria. The event rotates around the home offices of the host/organizer, which changes every year but is always one of four key players. This time around, Munich-based distribution company Telepool has the honors.

The German Screenings were originally set up by ARD, Germany's main state-owned broadcast organization. Later, the country's other public broadcaster, ZDF, entered the picture, and the two broadcasters organized the Screenings in tandem. After ZDF pulled out in 2004, the Screenings took on its current form as a co-venture between four organizations: the aforementioned

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Meet us!

Asia Television Forum 2009
2-4 Dec, Stand G03

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Inspired by the actual 12th Century statesman and warrior, the series proposes a fictional period in his life as a young adventurer, the experience of which shaped the great leader he would become. Eighteen years old and ready to take on the world, Saladin leaves his home city of Damascus with his lifelong friend TARIK in search of adventure - this is where the series begins.

Program Title :	SALADIN
Format :	26 x 26 minutes
Genre :	Action Adventure
Target Audience :	10 – 15 Years Old
Original Language :	English / Arabic
Release Date :	July 2010 (Season 1), June 2011 (Season 2)
Website :	www.saladin.tv

Co-produced by:

MDEC Driving Transformation

mscmalaysia.my

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Multimedia Development Corporation
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T: +603 8315 3000 (HQ)
E: marketing@saladin.tv

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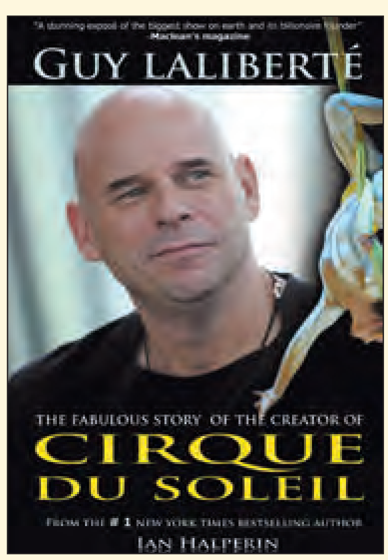

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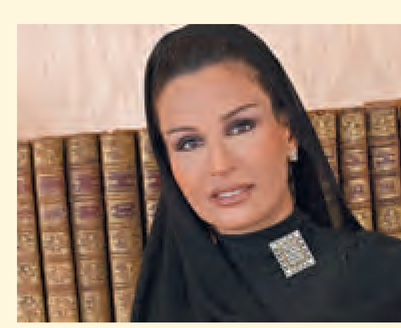


Meet us
Al Jazeera Children's Channel, stand G03
Asia Television Forum 2009, 2 – 4 Dec
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Cry For Me Argentina

Argentina's Congress has approved a bill that will give the government more control over the broadcast media. President Cristina Fernandez de Kirchner sponsored the controversial bill to replace a dictatorship-era law that allowed media power to be concentrated in the hands of a few companies. The new regulations are aimed at diversifying the public airwaves.

Despite consensus that the old law was in need of reform, media analysts are saying the move by the Kirchner government is designed to give the executive branch significant control of the airwaves. One article of the new law gives the president authority to appoint the majority of a new broadcast regulatory body. That group will be in charge of giving new licenses. Many fear that this will restrict freedom of expression, as Kirchner allies gain an advantage in bidding when media conglomerates are forced to give up their licenses.

Gustavo Vittori, president of the Association of Argentine Journalistic Entities, told *The New York Times* that many media outlets "are in favor of opening the industry to more voices." But, he said, "what we are questioning is the engineering of the reform. It is interventionist." In September, tax agents raided the offices of a major media power, Grupo Clarin, after Clarin's newspaper ran a story accusing a government agency of improperly granting a farm subsidy.

The design of the bill restricts any private company from having a national radio or television network, yet allows the government to have them, and will control important popular programming thanks to the state's recent takeover of television rights for professional football.

GE To Exit Showbiz

U.S. cable operator Comcast and conglomerate GE are closing in on an agreement in regard to GE's NBC Universal, with both companies agreeing to a timetable for GE's eventual exit from the entertainment business. It has been reported that Comcast has agreed to give GE the right to redeem portions of its interest in NBC Universal at the three-and-a-half and seven-year marks. This would lead to GE seceding from the operation entirely, giving full control to Comcast.

NBC Universal would become a separate entity that would then be merged with Comcast's cable networks. Comcast would contribute about $6 billion in cash to the new venture and own a 51 percent stake, with GE owning the other 49 percent. Furthermore, as part of the deal, GE would purchase France-based Vivendi's 20 percent interest in NBC Universal and put the debt on the books of the new company. The company would then have a $9 billion debt to start with and an estimated initial value of $30 billion.

The money that would be paid down the line to redeem GE's share of NBC Universal would come from cash flow from the new endeavor. If the new company can't fund the purchase of GE's redemption rights, Comcast has agreed to spend a total of up to $6 billion more to finance the move.

News Corp and Liberty Media also expressed interest in purchasing NBC Universal, but, reportedly, their bids were not serious threats to the deal.

Speculators Are Put on Notice

Democratic U.S. senator from Washington State, Maria Cantwell, is calling for nominees to the Commodity Futures Trading Commission (CFTC) to support "strong position limits" that would impose strict caps on the number of energy futures held by investors because of concerns that they are inflating prices.

Last year, senator Cantwell blocked three CTFC nominees, including the acting chairman at the time. The five CFTC commissioners must approve any new rule by a majority, and recently, two of the current commissioners expressed reservations about the proposed restrictions. They worry that restrictions could drive futures trading from the U.S. into unregulated "over-the-counter" markets. Traders have warned that a

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clampdown in the U.S. would move trading to London.

Future traders, however, seem resigned to new trading limits in some form. "This is inevitable," said one lobbyist with the CME Group. "It's just a matter of when and how and who."

Affected the most by CFTC's newly found authority include sectors like banking, oil, currency trading and investments: All had an active role in creating the current financial crisis and poor economic enviroment.

IPTV Is Where Cable Can't Be

According to a recent report from the Jordan-based Arab Advisors Group, there were six countries in the Middle East/North Africa (MENA) region offering IPTV services as of May 2009 — Algeria, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Qatar and the UAE. This number was up from the four that were wired as of August 2007. Reportedly there are also seven other countries/governments working towards integrating IPTV technology, including Egypt, Kuwait, Oman and Tunisia.

The growth of the IPTV platform in the aforementioned regions can be attributed to a number of factors. There has been an ongoing overhaul of outdated media legislation, a youthful demographic skew in many countries, and the rise of devoted media zones such as Dubai Media City have all led to a greater acceptance of new technologies and greater content production.

Additionally, UAE telco Etisalat is near completion on its citywide Fiber-to-the-Home network in Abu Dhabi.

Singapore's GIC Cut Its Gig

While the international TV industry was heading to the Asia TV Forum in Singapore, the Singapore government announced that its sovereign wealth fund is planning a shift towards emerging markets. This is surely good news for Asian, Latin American and African countries.

The Government of Singapore Investment Corp. (GIC) suffered an estimated U.S. $40 billion drop in its assets' values last year, partially due to ill-timed investments in developed countries. However, the GIC used its second annual report to point out that the strong market rally since April has helped it regain more than half of those losses.

It is estimated that the GIC fund's assets are valued at U.S.$300 billion, making it the world's third largest sovereign wealth fund. Investments cover all industries, including entertainment, media and trade show organizers.

Tony Tan, executive director of the GIC, told local media that the group would now focus on growth opportunities in fast-growing Asian economies. As of March 2009, Asia, excluding Japan, accounted for 13 percent of GIC's global portfolio, with the U.S. accounting for 38 percent. Holdings in real estate and private equity account for 30 percent.

GIC announced in September that it had pocketed a U.S. $1.6 billion profit after selling half of the nine percent stake in Citigroup it acquired during this year's U.S. government-led refinancing of the bank. On the flipside, however, the group's U.S. $10.7 billion investment in UBS, the Swiss bank, is now worth U.S. $6.2 billion.

It has been said that the fund's losses would have been higher had it not been for its decision to reduce its exposure to public equities in developed markets in the latter half of 2008.

Turkey Punishes Unfriendly Media

The equivalent of a U.S.$2.5 billion tax fine has been imposed on the Dogan media group in Turkey by the government of prime minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan, prompting a feud between him and the media group's owner, Aydin Dogan, who owns more than half of Turkey's print and broadcast media.

Prime minister Erdogan has often lashed out at Dogan, whose publications have portrayed his government as a threat to Turkey's secular order and reported aggressively on corruption scandals.

Erdogan asserted that the fine is not politically motivated, saying that inspectors were examining all media groups without bias.

On the other side of the argument, some Turkish journalists not involved in Dogan publications see the fine as the result of a situation in which businessmen with interests in sectors susceptible to state influence have exploited media ownership to wield political influence.


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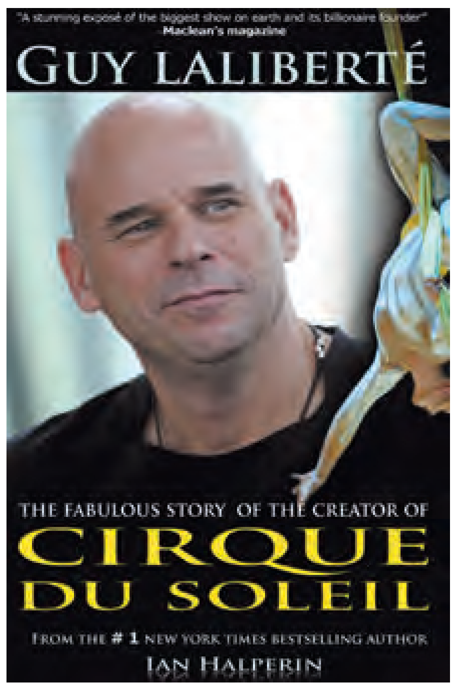
Good Gossip Makes For Bad Book in the Case of Laliberté

I'm at a bit of a loss in terms of reviewing the recent book by Ian Halperin, *Guy Laliberté: The Fabulous Story of the Creator of Cirque du Soleil* (2009, Transit Publishing, 230 pages). When the book was released in June, Laliberté, Halperin's main subject, was so furious he demanded the publishers pull all stock from shelves within 24 hours lest he slap with them a lawsuit. Shortly thereafter, Halperin himself sued Laliberté and the Cirque du Soleil for slander, claiming offense when Laliberte called him a "crook" and a "liar."

Having now read the book, which eventually became a bestseller in Laliberté's native Quebec, I can't understand the fuss.

Yes, there are quite a few scandalous revelations about Laliberté's alleged lifestyle and the behind-the-scenes activities at Cirque du Soleil, the globally popular circus-based show he founded in Montreal in 1984, but the tone of the writing is so sensationalist and the editorial style so poorly moderated, the book felt more like an extended article on a gossip site than anything else. Halperin is a Canadian investigative journalist and author of the bestselling book *The Final Years of Michael Jackson*. He is perhaps best known for having predicted the exact timeframe of Jackson's demise. Here, he sets his sights on Guy Laliberté, with whom he claims a sort of karmic connection. Like Laliberté, Halperin began his "professional" life as a busker on the streets of Quebec. It is perhaps for that reason (and the fact that Halperin eventually developed a "friendship" with one of Laliberté's former lovers) that the author deemed the entrepreneur worthy of exposé.

In terms of relevance to most *VideoAge* readers, it was disappointing to find no mention of Cirque du Soleil Images — the entertainment conglomerate's television production and distribution arm. Images was an important extension of Laliberté's business expansion plan, and yet Halperin is clearly more interested in kicking up dirt than going into detail on the development of the Cirque du Soleil brand.



Halperin sets up the Laliberté story with some anecdotal information about his childhood (though who knows how valid it is, coming from "friends" who probably shouldn't have been so eager to offer it up). "[Guy would] disappear for hours on end, and his parents would have trouble finding him. He once rode his tricycle to the other part of town, and his parents had to look for him for hours. He was much smarter than your average kid. At age four he was already organizing lemonade sales outside his family's home," one friend reveals. What this information is meant to suggest remains to be seen.

The next pivotal moment highlighted by Halperin? "In 1978, [Laliberte] flew to London's Heathrow airport with less than C$1,000 in his pocket, along with an accordion, a harmonica, a Jew's harp, and a set of musical spoons. Determined to conserve his savings until he discovered whether he could actually make money busking, his [sic] spent his first night sleeping on a bench in Hyde Park." Halperin makes a point of saying that this story had particular resonance for him because he too had once flown to London to busk and spent his first night sleeping in the park. This is all well and good, but to the average reader I imagine this comes off as more insane than brave. I assume the hope was to paint Laliberté as a gutsy risk-taker from the start.

Guy Laliberté first decided to put together what later became Cirque du Soleil in honor of the celebrations of the 450th anniversary of French explorer Jacques Cartier's arrival in Canada. Millions of people from all over the world were expected to descend on the province. Cirque du Soleil made its Quebec debut in June of 1984, and then set out as a road show, hitting 11 cities over the course of three months and attracting more than 30,000 spectators overall. The success of the circus was garnering significant attention for the Canadian province, and thus earned the respect and backing of the government.

As the show's popularity grew, so did demand for grueling and ever-changing performances. Halperin suggests that this was one of the roots of the widespread drug abuse behind the scenes. "The drugs of choice were not just pot and alcohol; the abuse of substances like cocaine, LSD, and heroin became prevalent. Laliberté was all too aware but turned a blind eye," he writes. Further detail comes from "a former Cirque clown who asks to be identified as Jacques": "It's amazing that some of the performers didn't pass out or die during a performance. There was plenty of white powder and brown powder around the circus. I saw people injecting, smoking, and snorting right on site. I was no angel either; I used to snort lines of coke each day in the bathroom before rehearsal would begin. It's amazing I'm still alive. It's amazing any of us are. We partied just as hard as we practiced. We needed it to get by. Life in Cirque du Soleil was not glamorous at all; it was very difficult work. Drugs gave us the relief we needed."

Now, if it weren't so easy to believe that performers in an artistic field enjoy dabbling in mind-altering substances, I'd have a hard time taking anonymous information as truth. That's one of the main problems with this book as a whole. So many of the juiciest tidbits come from people with fake names or tenuous ties to Laliberté. (Not to mention the stylistic discrepancies – in some places, the anonymous sources are designated in italics, in other places, quotation marks. It's all fairly amateurish). As stated earlier, the overall feel is that of trashy tabloid journalism, as opposed to in-depth, well-researched expose. And this is not to say that Halperin didn't try. But as is to be expected, stories of backstage antics and improper behavior are not usually the first things people in a true inner circle would be willing to divulge.

The next example of Laliberté's risk taking that Halperin highlights occurred in 1987. "After re-privatizing Cirque and establishing [financial adviser, Daniel] Gauthier and himself as principal owners, he set his sights on the biggest circus ring in showbiz: Hollywood. Robert Fitzpatrick, president and founder of the Los Angeles Arts Festival, invited Cirque to be a featured act…. Laliberté took the gamble and booked the entire production a one-way trip. Had the show been a flop, Cirque would have had to walk back to Montreal."

This is some seriously melodramatic writing. Sure, booking one-way tickets for his players was a confident move, but it was hardly momentous. What makes Halperin's declaration even shakier is the talking point that follows. The author offers up the following quote: "The greatest business people in the world are giant risk takers. Every person I studied who has been successful has taken giant risks — people like Bill Gates, Warren Buffett, and even politicians like President Barack Obama. Laliberté, back then, put his money where his mouth is. He put it all on the line. Those are the kind of people I consider to be real players and leaders. They're the type of people who will rewrite history."

And to whom do we owe these words of wisdom? Dan Weisman, "a California based financial analyst." As in, someone who has absolutely no direct knowledge of Laliberté and his dealings and is simply making sweeping statements about characters in the annals of financial history. Now, again, my comments are not meant to discredit Halperin's research. Certainly, some sort of credit is due for tapping such an eclectic array of sources. I just mean to point out that the opinions given should be taken with a grain of salt.

The bottom line is, Laliberté shouldn't be concerned with the existence of this book. In this day and age of popularized and published scandal, very little is shocking. Which is to say, reading that a billionaire throws lavish parties rife with sexual and chemical experimentation is hardly new or news. And Halperin is pretty consistent in pointing out the positive traits of Laliberté's character — whether by highlighting his charity work or desire to please or by discrediting his accusatory ex-girlfriends. *The Fabulous Story of the Creator of Cirque du Soleil* is quick, throwaway reading and if nothing else, gives an amusing new angle to the recent news story about Laliberté becoming a space tourist. **KR**

Watch The World Through Italian Lens

Join us and the following Italian production houses at the Asian Television Forum at Suntec Singapore, Halls 601 & 602 (Stand J18) from 2nd - 4th December 2009.

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A Good Market Needed To Reinforce Spirits & Wallets

The mood was surprisingly upbeat at MIPCOM 2009, and it wasn't just because of the spectacular weather. Over 12,000 delegates from the international television industry were present in Cannes. Buyers were also out in full force, with over 4,000 in town compared to the 3,500 at MIP-TV. Despite the fact that the numbers were lower than the 13,500 recorded in 2008, the relatively high figures still provided a good boost to the international TV business.

MIPCOM was fertile ground for new companies, as well. As reported in *VideoAge* Daily, some 10 new companies were announced, including former NBC Universal and Power exec Chris Philip's Engine Entertainment, Ken DuBow's Imageworks, and D3Telefilm from Cord Douglas and Douglas Price. While they failed to make front cover news individually, cumulatively they represented a significant development considering the still-recuperating world economy.

There was also a surprise visit from Mediaset boss Pier Silvio Berlusconi, who arrived in Cannes the day before the opening of MIPJunior — the children's TV market that preceded MIPCOM — to check on Endemol, his recent investment.

MIPJunior saw a massive presence from Middle East-based Al Jazeera Children's Channel, which prefers the abbreviation JCC in order to not be confused with Qatar-based Al Jazeera News Channel. At MIPJunior, JCC launched its new co-production children's animation series *Saladin*.

"At MIP-TV in April, a lot of people

WIN's John Hatcher and Bruce Gordon

were taking stock of the economic crisis and wondering when things would get better," said Laurine Garaude, acting Television Division director at Reed MIDEM. "At MIPCOM, conversations [were] about re-thinking business strategies. People [were] talking about new alliances to finance production, new channel strategies to consolidate their brand position in the international market and how they are thinking about monetizing the multi-platform potential of their content at the start of the creative process." In fact, the concept of "Re-thinking" was so popular that it was the official MIPCOM theme, a topic also used by the Advertising Research Foundation's March 2009 conference in New York City.

MIPCOM 2009 also recorded a good showing from U.S., Australian and Latin American buyers. With some 150 Latin buyers, MIPCOM is fast becoming Latin America's third major TV trade show after NATPE and the L.A. Screenings. Following Disney's lead, all other U.S. studios have increased the number of Latin representatives at their stands.

Among the U.S. buyers, there was Comcast International Networks' Gracia Waverly looking to acquire lifestyle programs from international sellers. From Australia, there was WIN boss Bruce Gordon and his evp, John Hatcher.

Bernard Majani, director of Acquisitions for France's M6, commented: "It was a very active market this year, but the crisis was still there and we were more than ever extremely cautious about our acquisitions." But, he added, "That doesn't mean that we are not continuing to take risks."

However, judging from the outstanding crop of new shows, both from the studios and the independents, there weren't many risks to take this time around. Starz Media launched its series *Spartacus* to much acclaim. Canada's CCI went all out with *Artzooka!*, a dynamic children's art series. FremantleMedia was in Cannes with an array of new product, including *Atomic Wedgie*, a new product line featuring comedy clips.

One sign of the improving global economic environment was the presence

The CCI team launched Artzooka!

of Hasbro CEO/president, Brian Goldner. Last May, Goldner announced that Hasbro was partnering with Discovery Communications to launch a children's channel in 2010. The company had recently announced the creation of Hasbro Studios, which is set to produce television programming and films for the U.S. and international markets, as well as online and digital elements. Fellow toy and games manufacturer Mattel is also dabbling in television. On day two of MIPCOM, U.K.-based ITV Studios and Mattel announced that ITV Studios will begin developing several Mattel board-game brands into international television formats and multi-platform properties.

The emphasis on potential new business models was prevalent. Day one at MIPCOM featured seminars on both new funding methods and the gaming business boom. The former offered examples of location incentives designed by the governments of Canada, France and the U.K., among others. The gaming seminar was well attended by executives and developers interested in tapping into the whopping 50 percent of the world's population that currently plays video games — the combination of console games, online games and mobile apps generated roughly $40 billion in worldwide revenue in 2008.

Despite the optimism displayed by the gaming industry representatives, there was a palpable sense of hesitation from television veterans concerned with their bottom lines. This was made particularly evident by day three's standing-room-only seminar on monetizing online content. Nobody seemed to be quite sure how to get around the treacherous

FME's David Ellender, Rob Clark, Tony Cohen at a press conference

questions of licensing rights and piracy, but with major players such as the BBC and Comcast actively developing multi-platform technologies, changes are most definitely on the horizon.

One existing sector of the television business that appeared to be keeping its pace was the format business. Mid-MIPCOM, the Format Recognition and Protection Association (FRAPA) presented its latest report on formats covering the period of 2006-2008. According to the report, which covered 14 major territories, production volume generated by traded formats was worth 9.3 billion euro, a 45 percent increase over the 2002-2004 period.

The continued success of formats seems to be a direct result of the economic crisis and the evolution of digital broadcasting. International companies are being forced to rethink their production and purchasing trends. Christiane Wittich of Germany's Studio Hamburg said, "Popular genres like nature and wildlife documentaries will continue to be sold successfully all over. That kind of genre is versatile and long-lasting." And, added The Fremantle Corporation's Irv Holender, "Acquiring content is still significantly cheaper than producing programs in-house."

More than 1,600 companies exhibited in Cannes and more than 4,120 business entities from over 100 countries participated at this year's event, thus maintaining MIPCOM's status as a highly effective forum for connecting with both established and potential international partners. **KR** ●

JCC launched its new series Saladin

Serious Buyers With Fewer Dollars Save The Mart's Day

Starz Media's Gene George

The result of the 30th annual American Film Market (AFM) can be summarized by Starz Media's executive vp, Worldwide Distribution, Gene George: "If you have a great product it's a solid business. It's a good market, all the key buyers are here, if not in full force."

The Fremantle Corporation's Irv Holender expressed a relatively similar sentiment: "The AFM is tremendously down, but all serious buyers are here." Cord Douglas who, together with Douglas Price, recently started distribution company D3 Telefilm, was astonished that he was able to find an exhibition room at the Loews Hotel, the AFM headquarters, just a few weeks before the Santa Monica, California-based market commenced, commenting, "The market has been good for us. Need to consider that 90 percent of sales success is product."

In its official press release, AFM's organizer, the Independent Film and Television Alliance (IFTA), stressed the large number of films screened at the eight-day market, rather than the number of exhibitors. Between November 4-11, 445 films were presented.

The reason for this shift in focus may be that many exhibitors did not return with an office this year, leaving the nearby Le Merigot Hotel with fewer exhibition rooms than last year and last-minute availability at the Loews.

Italy was visibly under-represented, with Medusa Film serving as the country's only exhibitor. The number of Italian buyers was also down to only 16 companies, with the largest contingent coming from Mediaset, Medusa's parent company.

The Fremantle Corp.'s Irv Holender with producer Shannon Gardner

D3 Telefilm's Cord Douglas said, "Some 15 Italian brokers came to visit us and all wanted to take our trailers to Mediaset. But we can sell to Mediaset directly. We'd need them for selling to RAI, but all refused." Rumor has it that in Hollywood, film buying for RAI has a gatekeeper, and distribution companies know what they've got to do.

The reduced Italian presence may be attributed to the massive and exclusive support that Italians have given to the newly launched Roma Cinema Fest, which ended 11 days prior to the AFM.

Officially, this AFM hosted a record 80-plus newly accredited acquisition companies, more than doubling the amount of first-time participants in previous years. Of the new acquisition companies, 13 were from South Korea, 10 from the U.S., seven from Russia, five from China, and four from Canada. Additionally, there were multiple buying companies from Brazil, France, Germany, Hungary, India, Mexico, Spain and the Czech Republic.

On the exhibitors' side, there were 369 companies with suites (43 fewer than last year) from 44 countries. The AFM is an all-suite market, where hotel suites are converted into sales offices by removing the beds. The few stands are located in the foyers of each floor.

Another thing that Irv Holender noticed was the lack of TVQ movies (those lacking big names or "quotient"), which tend to discourage buyers who "are now going back to TV series."

According to Cinevest Interactive's Arthur Schweitzer, who went back to selling movies after the ReedMidem experience, "The AFM has a new life. Buyers have returned to do deals and sales for new platforms that are emerging, especially for VoD."

Schweitzer's suite was on the second floor, which would have been bearable "if there had been better signage on how to get there." Otherwise, he said, "The market has been well organized."

Traditionally, suites below the fourth floor, which is also the lobby level, are not considered as valuable as those above it.

In the view of one European buyer, the market was saturated with thrillers and horror films, but Starz Media's George noted the focus on his company's *Paper Heart*, a love story, and The Fremantle Corporation's Holender highlighted *Humble Pie*, a new bittersweet comedy from the makers of *Napoleon Dynamite*.

PorchLight's Chris Lancey

All in all, for the indies crowding the AFM halls, business has not stopped. Their experience is simply different from that of the studios that are amassing huge profits, as recently disclosed by Warner Bros., which announced they are "marching toward [our] most profitable year ever."

The solid business element of the AFM was emphasized by the large number of banks present as both exhibitors and participants. Two bank executives who flew south from Montreal, Canada were seeking to lend money to projects that had received pre-sales from either a distributor or a TV outlet. New Jersey-based Tax Credit, LLC, an exhibitor who advises film producers on tax credits available in 15 U.S. states was also quite prominent.

However, as AFM's financially-oriented conferences pointed out, there is no easy money anymore. Lenders have become more conservative, and financing from outside the U.S. is now considered "smart money, versus dumb money." Furthermore, the weak U.S. dollar is making exchange rates a boon for American producers.

Jose Antonio Espinal, CEO of newly formed SomosTv with Eugenio Lacayo

The market's busiest day was definitely day three (Friday), when the hotels' halls and lobbies were filled to capacity. PorchLight's Chris Lancey, who was at the AFM pre-selling his new TV movie, *The Stepson*, now in pre-production, advanced the theory that the market would be busy again on day six (Monday), after buyers did their own shopping and took advantage of favorable exchange rates and low prices.

A curious tidbit was U.S. President Barack Obama's message, prominently displayed in the AFM's Show Directory, which did not make one single reference to the AFM, leading one to believe that it was a standard letter received through the U.S. Commerce Department.

The reduced Italian presence was certainly made up for by a large Asian contingent, particularly from Singapore, which is now billed as Asia's clearinghouse for audiovisual projects. At a reception in Santa Monica, the Media Development Authority (MDA) of Singapore announced the first film to receive the support of the International Film Fund that was launched at this year's Cannes Film Festival. *Neon Sign* will be the first Singapore-China-Korea film co-production and is scheduled for release in 2011. Christopher Chia, CEO of MDA commented, "This tripartite collaboration represents the growing synergies among Asian Countries and our abilities to tell Asian stories concerning universal topics such as music and culture in a unique way for an international audience."

Another myth shattered at this AFM was that come November, buyers tend to run out of money after the larger and more influential MIPCOM that ends a few weeks prior to the California event. According to some buyers, if they see a product that fits well in their line-up, they are able to ask for and receive an extra budget from their companies.

This is certainly another sign that the global economy is improving. ●

DISCOP Africa 3 Races to Dakar

BY DAVID SHORT

The third edition of DISCOP Africa is set to take place at the Taranga Pullman Dakar Hotel in Dakar, Senegal, February 24-26, 2010.

After the success of the first DISCOP Africa in Dakar last February and the second edition in Nairobi, Kenya, conference managers are hopeful for an even greater turnout.

DISCOP aims to bring together programmers, producers, distributors and advertisers to stimulate the growth of the television industry in Africa. "Holding two events so close to each other has definitely increased the reach of our DISCOP platform across the continent, with half the African broadcasters and pay-TV platforms attending in Nairobi being new to the market," said Paris-based DISCOP general manager, Patrick Jucaud.

As for the second Dakar event in 2010, Jucaud reported that, as per last month, 100 programming and acquisitions executives were already registered. The year 2010 is poised to be a hot one for TV in Africa, with the World Cup being held in South Africa. Basically, there will be two DISCOP Africa editions in 2010: one in Dakar in February, and the other in Nairobi in September. From 2011 on, there will be only one edition per year, alternating between Dakar and Nairobi, in September.

Jucaud added that DISCOP Africa is having a knock-off effect on more established markets, noting that fewer Africans are traveling to MIPTV, MIPCOM and NATPE. "Recent surveys have found that TV content buyers from Africa account for less than two percent of international acquisitions executives traveling to the major trade shows," he said.

Cost is also a factor. Many African currencies are weak, few of them are convertible, and some countries have restrictions on how much money one can take out of the country. Even Angola, awash with billions of oil bucks, recently restricted access to dollars.

Nevertheless, audiovisual content production, distribution and funding are fast becoming of high-importance in an emerging nation with 53 countries, more than eight official languages spoken, and where 33 percent of Africans are between the ages of 10 and 24. Only 5.2 percent of the people have access to the Internet, while 27 percent have mobile access and one person in 10 has a television set. Because of the lack of infrastructure, cellular phone services really took off and, with them, great opportunities to upgrade to broadband services such as Wi-Fi and Wi-Max, which gives IPTV a clear advantage over cable.

DISCOP Africa is organized by Basic Lead, the Paris-based group that organizes DISCOP East in Budapest, Hungary, and is associated with the Los Angeles-based NATPE.

Despite limited programming options in the past, television advertising opportunities in Africa will grow by double digits due to better programming, and will reach more than 977.1 million people, according to a 2008 DISCOP study.

In addition, according to DISCOP, the average gross domestic product in all 53 African countries is up five percent from last year — and growing.

Buyers at the inaugural DISCOP reported to organizers that they were seeking various types of programming, including series (71 percent), TV movies (59 percent), documentaries (58 percent), telenovelas (55 percent), sporting events and educational content (53 percent each), game shows and features (49 percent each) and animation (45 percent).

In addition to buying and selling, market organizers also guarantee networking opportunities with seminars, galas and parties. Key conferences include: "Digitalization: Leading Africa into a New Era" on the first day, followed by "Health Content that Sells."

Scenes from Discop Africa 2009

On Day Two, one can attend four separate case studies of "Successful Formats for Africa." On the last day of the event, the seminar program opens with the "Attracting Advertising Revenue Workshop," followed by the "Made in Africa Workshop." The conference sessions will be held (with one or two exceptions) at the beginning and end of the day at the nearby Novotel.

As for how much business will be done, delegates who went to the first DISCOP in Dakar reported different experiences. For Micheline Azoury, International Sales manager for Africa and the Middle East at Italy's Mondo TV, the market was "a great new successful experience for us. I would do it again and again." She added that African broadcasters have to be approached and pitched differently. "We pretty much need to understand the culture there," she said, adding that African buyers concentrated on the budget they had rather than the concept of what the market needed.

What the buyers wanted intrigued her. "I was surprised to see that the Latin American telenovelas and animation programs were a big success in Africa," said Azoury, who spoke to *VideoAge* before the Nairobi event. "I'm really looking forward to Nairobi," she said. "I believe we can do a lot more business with Kenyan broadcasters." She commented, though, that the first DISCOP lacked a strong trade press presence. "There was a lack of the international magazines which usually cover all the markets," she said, before adding that some African countries weren't represented at all.

For Bill Peck of Star Media Group in London, Dakar was a different story. "It was a brilliantly well-organized market, and had a lot of buzz and enthusiasm. Sadly, the aftermath has been disappointing — with zero responses from the various people I met." Peck did not go to Nairobi, and has no plans to revisit Dakar.

It's little wonder it takes time to get to know the African marketplace, and how it does business. Africa has more countries than any other continent, even more ethnic groups, and hundreds more languages than the main colonially acquired ones of English, French and Portuguese. Sub-Saharan Africa has roughly 1,000 tribes or language groups; Nigeria has almost 400 tribes.

Not only that, the media landscape changes all the time. The DISCOP organization compiled the first-ever guide to the African TV industry for the first Dakar event, now published separately as Disbook. Cherise Barsell, head of Audiovisual Sector/Africa at DISCOP explained: "The book is filled with our database of African contacts and a lot of time and energy is put into updating and validating them — the African market changes so quickly! Normally, it is only available to our participants, but with a growing demand, we decided to make it available at the market."

Senegal, where the market takes place in February, is a case in point. According to Disbook, five new TV stations have sprung up in the last seven years alone. In 2002, the public service broadcaster, Radio Tòlòvision Sònògalaise, launched a third station, SN2, joining existing stations, RTS1 and RTS2 — themselves only set up in 1992. All three are general interest channels. The following year saw the launch of Senegal's first commercial station, 2STV, which has now a 92 percent share. In 2006 alone, three channels went on air. They were two generalist stations, RDV (76.5 percent share) and Walf TV (93 percent), followed by news channel Canal Info (62 percent).

According to Disbook, Senegalese TV is watchable because of factors usually more associated with North America and Europe, "The competitive landscape driven by available ratings and audience data contribute to quality TV."

David Short is a consultant on communications for the African Development Bank. He writes here in a private capacity.

Key Latin American Program Buyers

(Continued from Cover)

TV Azteca's Pedro Lascurain B.

Games or Formula One car racing.

Latin America comprises 21 countries, plus 22 Caribbean islands, of which Puerto Rico and the Dominican Republic are the largest TV territories (Cuba is not yet a major TV territory, but many expect it soon will be). The millions of viewers in these territories don't even take into account the 28 million Spanish-language (Hispanic) viewers in the U.S.

Latin America is a TV universe of 91 million TVHH served by 120 terrestrial TV networks requiring close to 700,000 hours of programming per year.

This vast area is also served by 150 Pan-American cable and satellite TV networks (the "Pan-regionals") and has some 13 million pay-TVHH subscribers (through cable, MMDS, DTH and broadband).

In 1995, a *VideoAge* special report valued the global Latin American market (including pay-TV) at $500 million, a 48 percent increase from 1992. Of this, the U.S. studios' (MPAA members') share was $440 million, while members of the Independent Film & Television Alliance (IFTA is a U.S.-based international association) generated $31.5 million. The remainder was shared among the rest of the international producers and syndicators around the globe.

Currently, this program market is valued at $1.5 billion, meaning that it has tripled over a 14-year period, aided by the addition of telcos. The $1.5 billion represents 10 percent of world TV sales. Of that, 84.6 percent is taken by U.S. studios. Of the remaining 15.4 percent ($230 million a year), IFTA members take $173 million, Latin American producing countries get $48 million and the balance goes to the rest of the international sellers. Countries such as Spain and Italy, which share many cultural similarities with Latin American countries, have in essence lost Latin America to the U.S., the U.K. and Canada.

The top U.S. seller is Warner Bros., followed by Disney. Sony, NBC Universal and Fox all have an equal share of the market, with Paramount and MGM trailing.

In terms of price range per one-hour of a television series or TV movie, the region is structured per the box above.

Pan-regionals:	$15,000 (low-end)	$20,000 (mid-range)	$25,000 (high-end)
Brazil:	$15,000	$20,000	$25,000
Mexico:	$10,000	$15,000	$20,000
Argentina:	$3,000	$4,000	$5,000
Chile:	$3,000	$4,000	$5,000
Venezuela:	$3,000	$4,000	$5,000
Colombia:	$2,000	$3,000	$4,000
Ecuador:	$1,000	$1,500	$2,000
Puerto Rico:	$1,000	$1,200	$1,500

For television product like documentaries and children's shows, prices are at least 50 percent lower than those indicated above. License fees of non-commercial TV series and PBS-type TV movies are also lower.

For the U.S. studios, Puerto Rico is counted as part of English-language U.S. domestic sales, and only two TV outlets (see listings on page 20) buy Spanish-language rights.

For television product, the whole region (including the Pan-regionals) is worth up to $102,200 per hour (with a low of $55,900 and a middle range of $80,700).

For theatrical movies, the region is generally worth about 15 percent of its negative costs. Other price ranges for commercial movies are:

Brazil: $25,000 to $250,000
Mexico: $15,000 to $225,000
Argentina: $10,000 to $75,000
Chile: $5,000 to $40,000
Venezuela: $5,000 to $40,000
Colombia: $5,000 to $35,000
Ecuador: $5,000 to $20,000
Perú: $5,000 to $20,000

Some of the Pan-regionals operate under an artificial market — especially the studio partnerships — and therefore the prices of movies are capped. The Atlanta, Georgia-based LAPTV, for example, is a partnership between Fox, MGM and Paramount. NBC Universal is no longer part of the LAPTV partnership, but still has an exclusive pay-TV deal with it. The Miami, Florida-based HBO Olé is a partnership between Warner Bros., Sony Pictures and Walt Disney. For the U.S. studios, the pay-TV market in Latin America is worth at least $225 million a year due to these partnerships and has two revenue streams: license fees and dividends.

The five leading Latin American production countries (Mexico, Brazil, Argentina, Colombia and Venezuela) mostly air their own homemade content on their flagship stations, but do tend to buy content for their other TV channels. For example, programming on Mexico-based Televisa's flagship station, Canal 2, is fully home-grown, but the group buys shows for its three additional channels — Canal 4, Canal 5 and Canal 9 — in addition to its pay-TV services. Brazil's Globo TV, on the other hand, has one channel that it typically programs with homemade fare, and one pay service. Brazil's SBT only buys for its own channel and has a long-standing output deal with Warner Bros., which is now estimated to be worth at least $80 million for a four-year period.

With their home-grown productions, the five leading Latin American countries generate an estimated total of $95 million per year from program sales in the international TV market. Recently, some of the Pan-regionals, like Fox, have started producing original content.

Of the 21 countries in the LatAm region, nine key Latin American territories plus the Pan-regionals represent about 90 percent of the region's total TV program acquisition investments. They are: Brazil, Mexico and Argentina, followed by Chile and Colombia, Venezuela, Ecuador, Puerto Rico and Perú.

However, in terms of volume, some smaller territories such as Chile and Ecuador — which do not produce much local fare — buy many more programming hours than larger countries, just at much lower license fees. Other high-volume/low-fee buyers include Panama, Costa Rica, El Salvador and Honduras.

Telefe's Julian Rodriguez Montero

Latin American Key Buyers

(In order of acquisitions budgets)

PAN-REGIONAL **(Market valued at $500 million per year):**

1. HBO Olé: Luis F. Peraza, Helena Bernardi, William Benshimol, Maria Graciela Bastardo, Gaston Comas, Maria Angela De Jesus, Gustavo Grossman, Jose Manuel Pagani, Roberto Rios, Alexander Salas ($160 million per year)
2. LAPTV: Richard Rohrback ($85 million per year)
3. TBS: Angel Zambrano, Cindy S. Kerr, Rick Perez, Pablo Corona, Analia Pollero, Marcelo Tamburri
4. Discovery Latin America: Bilai Joa Silar, Marisol Amaya, Arelys Carballo, Hortensia Quadreny, Luis Silberwasser, Claudia Chagui
5. Sony: Vanessa Arevalo, Carolina Padula
6. Fox (FLAC): Emiliano Saccone, Patricia Daujotas, Gonzalo Fiure
7. A&E Mundo: Eduardo (Eddy) Ruiz, Beatriz O'Higgins, Isabel Quintero
8. Warner Canal: Gregg Drebin, Wilma Maciel
9. MGM Latino: Jorge Balleste, Sarita Salas, Tere Villar
10. Albavision: Angel Gonzalez, Ignacio Barrera, Analida Lopez ($14 million per year)
11. Universal Channels: Steve Patscheck, Angel Gomez, Diana Puentes
12. Nickelodeon/MTV: Dean Broadhurst, Migdalis Silva, Tatiana Rodriguez
13. PRAMER: Lucia Suarez ($5 million per year)

BRAZIL **(Market valued $260 million per year):**

1. GloboTV: Roberto Buzzoni, Paula Miranda ($90 million per year)
2. SBT: Daniela Beyruti, Richard Vaun Esh ($60 million per year)
3. Globosat: Claudia Macedo, Ana Claudia Paixao, Juliana Faria, Eduardo Leal ($45 million per year)
4. Record TV: Honorilton Goncalves, Paulo Calil ($25 million per year)
5. Bandeirantes: Helio Vargas, Goyo Garcia, Helena Perli ($17 million per year)
6. RedeTV: Elisa Ayub, Marcelo Carvalho, Monica Pimentel ($15 million per year)
7. Rede Telecine (Cable): Joao Mesquita, Monica Sonzogni ($8 million per year)

MEXICO **(Market valued at $220 million per year):**

1. Televisa: Alberto Ciurana, Carlos Sandoval A., Jaime Alvarez, Adrian Ortega ($100 million per year)
2. TV Azteca: Pedro Lascurain B., Guillermo Bouchot, Susan Rivera Cruz ($80 million per year)

(Continued on Page 20)

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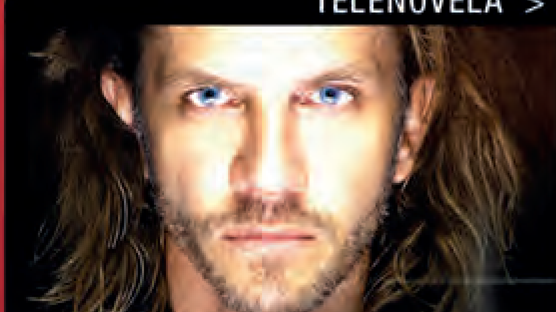

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Key Latin American Program Buyers

(Continued from Page 18)


MGM Networks' Jorge Balleste

3. **Cadena 3**: Erik Zuckermann, Luis Roberto Lopez, ($10 million per year)
4. **MVS**: Alejandro Vazquez-Vela, Claudia Morales ($8 million per year)
5. **PCTV**: Vanessa Velazquez R. Eugenio Dubernard ($7 million per year)
6. **Televisa Networks**: Bruce Boren, Ana Lydia Montoya, Karina Montoya ($6 million per year)
7. **Canal 11**: Silvia Perez Chavarria ($5 million per year)
8. **Canal 22**: Ricardo De Leon ($4 million per year)

ARGENTINA **(Market valued at $70 million per year):**
1. **Telefe**: Julian Rodriguez Montero ($35 million per year)
2. **Artear**: Walter Sequeira ($30 million per year)
3. **America 2**: Carlos Muchnik ($5 million per year)

CHILE **(Market valued at $40 million per year):**
1. **TVN** (Ch. 7): Maria Elena Wood, Paulina Jalaf ($13 million per year)
2. **Megavision** (Ch. 9): Jose Miguel Sanchez, Francisco Henriquez, Sofia Lopez ($11 million per year)
3. **Canal 13** (Universidad Catolica): Fernanda Demaria, Sebastian Freund, Mercedes Ducci ($7 million)
4. **Chilevision** (Ch. 11): Pablo Morales, Maria de los Angeles Ortiz ($6 million per year)
5. **VTR (cable)**: Ana Maria Nuñez ($3 million per year)

COLOMBIA **(Market valued at $40 million per year):**
1. **Caracol**: Camilo Acuna, Asier Aguilar, Dago Garcia, Paulo Laserna, Carolina Leconte ($15 million per year)
2. **RCN**: Gabriel Reyes, Ricardo Cruz, Sara Gutierrez ($10 million per year)
3. **CityTV**: Lorencita Santamaria, Olga Navarro, Martha Lucia Florez


Venevision's Soledad Leiva Garcia

($7 million per year)
4. **Telecolombia**: Samuel Duque, Mariangelica Duque ($2.5 million per year)
5. **Recall**: Elisabeth Jaeckel, Jacqueline Lemos ($2 million per year)
5. **Zebracom**: Luisa Orrego ($2 million per year)
6. **Provideo**: Luis Stipanovic ($1.5 million per year)

VENEZUELA **(Market valued at $30 million per year):**
1. **Venevision**: Miguel D'Vorak, Manuel Fraiz-Grijalba, Carlos Noguera, Soledad Leiva Garcia ($22 million per year)
2. **RCTV**: Eladio Lárez, Inés Bacalao de Peña ($5 million per year)
3. **Televen**: German Perez-Nahim, Mirentxu Guerrero ($2 million per year)
4. **Canal 1**: Ruben Dario Rojas ($1 million per year)

ECUADOR **(Market valued at $25 million per year):**
1. **Ecuavisa**: Xavier Alvarado, Kattia Baldeon, Noboa Juan, Karina Medina ($14 million per year)
2. **Gamavision**: Iti de Donoso, Nicolas Vega ($ 5 million per year)
3. **TCTV**: Blanca Ugarte ($3 million per year)
4. **Teleamazonas**: Sebastian Corral, Margarita Davalos, Eulalia Eguiguren ($2 million per year)
5. **Canal 1/ECTV**: Marcel Rivas, Jose Maria Rivas ($1 million per year)

PERÚ **(Market valued at $22 million per year):**
1. **Frequencia**: Cecilia Gomez de la Torre, Javier Urrutia ($14 million per year)
2. **America TV**: Eric Jurgensen, Luis Guillermo Camacho ($6 million per year)
3. **PanAmericana** (Pantel): Carlos Espinoza Bravo ($2 million per year)

PUERTO RICO **(Market valued at $20 million per year):**
1. **WAPA**: Jimmy Arteaga, Joe Ramos, Alan Sokol ($14 million per year)
2. **Telemundo de Puerto Rico**: Hillary Hatler, Froyd Rivera ($6 million per year)

Rede Globo, Disney Pump Up The Volume

The invitation to the announcement of an agreement between Disney Media Network Latin America (DMNLA) and Brazil's Rede Globo promised something special. And indeed it delivered. The setting selected was the 15th floor of the Viceroy Hotel in downtown Miami, Florida. Guests passed the rooftop pool and reached the spa below where DMNLA had set up two rooms: one for the announcement, the other for refreshments.

A delegation of four people came from Brazil, including Suzy Ubing from the legal department and Roberto Buzzoni, Rede Globo's program director.
The Disney delegation was headed by Fernando Barbosa, svp of Production and Distribution at DMNLA, and assisted by Henri Ringel, Jack Morera and Fabiola Bovino.

The press corps was out in full force, with journalists flying in from London, New York, Montevideo, Uruguay and Brazil, as well as a large number of local media.

Barbosa would not disclose the dollar value nor how many hours per year the agreement would cover, simply stating that is was a "volume deal," and not an "output deal."

In a "volume deal," the station has a limit on how much product they have to take. For example, say, four one-hour series, two half-hour series, or 200 films per year. The studio can then go to other networks and make an additional "volume deal".

But Barbosa explained that programs Globo doesn't take may be sold to other FTA networks in Brazil, but because of the special relationship with Globo, this would be done only in accordance and with approval from the network.

In an "output deal," the network must take everything that a studio produces. This means the studio only has one customer in the market.

Basically, the agreement between DMNLA and Globo is a renewal of a similar deal that started in 2005. The new one will be in force for the next four years and include exclusive free-to-air (FTA) rights for animation and other series and movies, including those from Disney's divisions: Touchstone, Hollywood Pictures, Miravista, and Pixar, as well as product from Lionsgate that Disney distributes. The agreement also covers FTA rights for the Academy Awards broadcast.

According to Buzzoni, Disney's product will fill schedules of all dayparts, taking into consideration that close to 90 percent of Globo's programming is produced in-house.

Official figures put this in-house annual programming output at 2,500 hours of telenovelas and 1,800 hours of news programs, which still leaves an estimated 1,500 hours a year to outside acquisitions.

In addition, Buzzoni said that all dubbing into Portuguese is done by Disney, which maintains a full office in Brazil for those kinds of operations. DMNLA also maintains regional offices in Argentina, Chile, Mexico and Venezuela, with the headquarters in Miami.

Thus, Disney had a great time this November, gaining China's approval for a theme park in Shanghai on top of this program volume deal with Brazil.

Pictured above: DMNLA's Henri Ringel, Jack Morera, Fernando Barbosa, Fabiola Bovino, TV Globo's Suzy Ubing, Roberto Buzzoni


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Asia TV Forum

(Continued from Cover)

France, Korea, Malaysia, Singapore, Spain and Taiwan.

According to official figures, Europe represented the largest selling contingent at ATF 2008 with 41 percent, followed by South Asia with 18 percent, the Americas with 15 percent, North Asia with 13 percent and the Middle East with 10 percent. Pricing for sellers starts at U.S.$9,360 for 18 square meters of exhibition floor space.

On the acquisitions side, South Asia buyers constituted the largest group with 62 percent, followed by North Asia with 31 percent. Buyers paid U.S.$638 for registration if from overseas and $427 if local.

According to Ganesh Rajaram, Singapore-based vp of Sales, Asia for FremantleMedia Enterprises, who plans to attend the upcoming market, "ATF is especially useful for those who do not get the chance to travel to the MIP-TVs and MIPCOMs, as it allows us to touch base with our clients one last time before year's end and gives us the opportunity to tie up loose ends." In addition, noted Rajaram, "From my perspective, it gives me more quality time with clients as it's not as manic as the major markets."

Artistic rendition of the Italian Exhibiting Pavilion at ATF 2009

Joy Olby-Tan, vp, Network Acquisitions, Channel 5, MediaCorp, will also be in attendance, as the market is held in her home country. "It provides a timely opportunity for the industry as we approach the end of the year, and also serves as a post-MIPCOM catch-up," she stated. Olby-Tan will focus on picking up entertainment content from around the world for Channel 5's 8-10 p.m. primetime block, but she also plans to keep an eye out for "products which are applicable to multiple platforms beyond the traditional goggle-box." Overall, the content she will be purchasing has to fit her channel's positioning, audience profile, and be something that the audience can relate to. On the general state of the industry, Olby-Tan said she and her colleagues are "seeking to overcome the tough economic climate of the past year as well as an increasingly fragmented viewing audience."

The theme of ATF 2009 will be the "Digital Future," with three days of seminars devoted to the subject. On day one, a series of sessions will explore emerging trends in musical composition and film/television production. On day two, formats will also take center stage as Rob Clark, Global Head of Entertainment, FremantleMedia, delivers a keynote speech on the topic. The third day of the market will host a conference entitled: "Future of Television Content: Multi-Platform Engagement and Digital Extension," during which panelists will explore ways to attract viewers back to traditional television, whether TV viewers can co-exist in the digital paradigm and the challenges broadcasters, network channels and media owners face in this changing media environment.

Also part of the ATF is the Media Development Authority-organized Asian Festival of First Films, which will hold its gala awards ceremony on December 4 to announce this year's winners in 11 categories. The Festival, which honors first-time excellence in filmmaking from the Asia-Pacific film community, is in its fifth year and begins before ATF on November 28, concluding at the gala. Another ATF-related event is the Asian Television Awards (ATA), which recognize, reward and encourage the production of quality television programming from across the Asian region and will be concluded at the ATA 2009 Gala Dinner and Awards Ceremony on December 3.


Corazón Salvaje
Wild Heart
Televisa
INTERNACIONAL

German Screenings

(Continued from Cover)

Telepool; Bonn-based Deutsche Welle, Germany's international radio-TV service (its television headquarters are in Berlin); Austrian state broadcaster ORF, which is based in Vienna; and Cologne-based German United Distributors (GUD).

GUD was set up as an offshoot of ARD in 1997. ARD is comprised of nine independently run regional public radio and TV organizations. It was two of ARD's leading member stations, WDR and NDR, which in 1997 spearheaded GUD in cooperation with Studio Hamburg and Bavaria Film Group. Earlier this year, another large ARD member, SWR, became a GUD shareholder. GUD also represents the program catalogues of ARD member stations HR and Radio Bremen.

In addition to representing some of ARD's member stations, GUD is an umbrella marketing organization for three independently run companies: Bavaria Film Group's Bavaria Media, Studio Hamburg and United Docs. The latter company specializes in documentaries and also handles GUD's nature and wildlife programs.

These three interdependent companies cooperate for the German Screenings and use GUD's stand during MIP-TV and MIPCOM. Still, they operate as independent sales entities. Munich's Bavaria Media and Hamburg's Studio Hamburg are tied as Germany's second largest production and distribution entities. The country's number one production company is RTL's Fremantle Grundy UFA.

Telepool is a company formed by some of Germany's other ARD regional public broadcasting member stations, including BR (Bavaria), MDR (central region), SR (Saarland region) SWR (southwest region) and Switzerland's TV organizations, SRG and SSR. In addition to distributing programs from independent producers, Telepool has handled RTL's library and all new RTL productions since 2007.

In view of the complex and intertwined German entertainment industry, the Screenings will also serve to better elucidate the various companies' shared ownerships to participants and members of the press.

For example, even though Studio Hamburg is owned by ARD regional member station NDR, the same broadcasting organization was instrumental in the creation of GUD. United Docs was set up by ARD member stations NDR, SWR, WDR,

Opening night event at last year's German Screenings at the Turnhalle restaurant in Hamburg, with Studio Hamburg's general manager, Gerd Richter-Kiewning, and NDR's Lutz Marmor, making the opening speeches. The Screenings were held at Le Royal Meridien.

Above, pre-planning the GS at a MIPCOM luncheon. L. to r. Telepool's Tina Harnish, Studio Hamburg's Christiane Wittich, Bavaria Media's Stefanie Fritz and Oliver Kreuter, and VideoAge*'s Dom Serafini.*
Pictured below, Le Meridien hotel in Munich is this year's edition headquarters.

HR and Radio Bremen. Similarly, Bavaria Film Group is owned by ARD member stations WDR, BR, SWR and MDR, as well as German national public broadcaster, ZDF. Of these, MDR and BR are also Telepool shareholders, and WDR and SWR are associated with GUD. Plus, Germany's RTL, which owns FremantleMedia, Grundy and UFA, has assigned its library to Telepool for distribution.

More than 125 buyers from Europe, Japan, Brazil and the Middle East are expected to participate at this year's German Screenings — some of whom didn't attend MIPCOM. More than 50 programming directors, editors and distributors will be arriving from France (many from TF1 and M6), Italy (from both Mediaset and RAI), Norway

More than 125 buyers from Europe, Japan, Brazil and the Middle East are expected to participate at this year's German Screenings — some of whom didn't attend MIPCOM. More than 50 programming directors, editors and distributors will be arriving from France, Italy, Norway, Sweden, Russia and Spain.

(NRK), Sweden (SVT), Russia (TV Cultura) and Spain (TV3). Buyers are encouraged to attend and can register online at *www.german-screenings.com*, but they must pay their own travel and accommodation expenses.

Programs to be shown represent seven categories: feature films, TV movies, series, documentaries, wildlife, children and music. However, only GUD and Telepool will offer feature films, while Deutsche Welle will focus on documentaries, children's and music programming. Many of the programs to be screened will feature English subtitles.

According to Helge Köhnen, director of Sales at Bavaria Media Distribution & Marketing, the screenings "are well timed for public broadcasters looking to purchase end-of-the-year programs since they have leftover money and airtime to fill."

Buyers will individually screen Bavaria Media's programs — which include the company's MIPCOM catalogue and 50 of its newest titles presented after MIPCOM — and other distributors' programming in more than 60 hotel rooms at the Le Méridien. These include the latest directors' cuts and finished product, which will be available for on-demand viewing.

Among the planned evening networking events are museum visits, bowling games, ice skating and Christmas shopping. ●


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Road To NATPE

(Continued from Cover)

will move to the Fontainebleau Hotel complex in Miami Beach, Florida in 2011.

For the upcoming event — the last to be held in Las Vegas — some potential NATPE exhibitors complained: "Why pay $7,350 per suite at THEHotel in Sin City, when one can get two adjacent hotel rooms for less than $2,000 on the same four days at the Mandalay Bay?"

Naturally, if a company exhibits outside the NATPE umbrella, it would not be listed in the market's official guide and no signage would be allowed. In addition, if not a part of the official registration, participants would not be able to receive copies of *VideoAge* Daily at NATPE in their hotel rooms because concierges (who will be delivering them) will not have a record of their participation. Plus, such rooms have to be stripped of beds at an extra charge.

But the most challenging issue for NATPE is not costs going up, but how attendees can hop from floor to floor without delay with just five elevators at THEHotel and two at the tower side of the shared reception area available.

With half of the exhibitors in suites at NATPE 2009, the slow elevators were a major cause of frustration for all involved. This time around, the elevator situation is expected to be even more of a nuisance considering that four new floors will be added below the penthouse (tower) side.

FremantleMedia, NBC Universal and CBS Paramount are expected to be in suites, as are several smaller distributors, independents and tech companies.

It is anticipated that most of the business at the upcoming market will be conducted at the restaurant and lounge tables that line the path to THEHotel's elevators in order to avoid elevator congestion.

To further alleviate elevator overcrowding, NATPE organizers are negotiating with THEHotel management to officially open the emergency doors that access the stairs at either end of the corridors. Last year, some participants used the emergency stairs to go from floor to floor (excluding the lobby), but only a few people knew this was even an option. Last year's conference took up eight floors with more than 6,500 attendees and more than 300 exhibiting companies.

NATPE officials like to point out that the booths on the convention floor are not completely dead. This time, the space is confined to a ballroom in the Mandalay Bay Plaza rather than the hotel's convention center.

The Televisa International contingent was out in full force at NATPE 2009

CABLEready's Gary Lico promoting CableU, a service that monitors and analyzes cable network performance and programming trends.

The ballroom is adjacent to the new registration area, and both are very close to THEHotel's lobby — which is much better than the long walk to reach the convention area that attendees were forced to take in previous years. The new marketplace exhibition floor will feature a lounge, a tech center and a digital theater for attendee use.

In 2010, NATPE will be held January 25-27. Sunday, January 24 will be reserved for setting up, a few afternoon events and a possible evening reception. Exhibitors are encouraged to start arriving on Saturday, January 23.

The Monday kickoff (as opposed to previous editions' Tuesday start-up) is attributed to the fact that in the past, companies in the suites had an advantage because they were able to start business earlier in the week, while those with stands were still setting up on Monday.

Despite this earlier start, some independent Latin American companies are still expected to set up appointments on Sunday, before buyers begin visiting the studios' suites on Monday. For this reason, *VideoAge* will start its daily edition on Monday, with a focus on Latin America.

In order to avoid a mass exodus on Wednesday, NATPE organizers are planning a series of seminars on the market's third day, focusing on Canada and Latin America. That same day, *VideoAge*'s own Dom Serafini will moderate a session entitled: "DTV in the U.S.: Your American Dream," which will examine international distributors' ability to provide content to U.S. TV stations, which have 5,000 new channels to program.

The announcement that NATPE will


Mediaset's Sonia Danieli (r.) and Tivú Sat's Nella Allegretti


NATPE will move to the Fontainebleau Hotel complex in Miami Beach, Florida in 2011

NATPE officials like to point out that the booths on the convention floor are not completely dead.

move to Miami Beach, Florida in 2011 was received favorably by most. In truth, Miami Beach wasn't NATPE's first choice, but circumstances in Las Vegas forced the organization to make the decision.

Some distributors did, however, express their unease with the locale since many Latin American TV program buyers have houses in the Miami area and most Latin sellers have offices around Miami. This aspect was cause for concern since there could be temptation to conduct business outside the hotel environment. However, it was pointed out that Santa Monica's American Film Market is a success despite the fact that many exhibitors have offices around Los Angeles. There, the hotel's centrality is always fully appreciated.

The Miami locale is also viewed favorably by potential European exhibitors and buyers who like the subtropical climate during the cold winter months, as well as the direct flights available to Miami from most nations' capitals.

Miami is not the most convenient place for Asian participants, but for many years now, NATPE has ceased being a major event for the Asian TV industry. Therefore, the Asian TV presence is not considered a make or break element.

In addition, if the European currency stays strong against the U.S. dollar, the premium high-season hotel rates and general costs will be compensated by the favorable euro-dollar exchange rate. ●

Conferences & Events News

TRAVELLERS GET THEIR NAMES BACK

For all of you who go by "Bud," :Bob," "Chuck," "Dick," "Curly" or "Missy," you no longer have to fear being stopped when you go through the Bush-era security checkpoints at U.S. airports.

The Transportation Security Administration (TSA) no longer requires that one's name on the airline ticket match exactly that on the passport or driver's license. International travelers were able to enjoy this privilege since last June, while domestic (U.S.) travelers have to wait until the end of March 2010.

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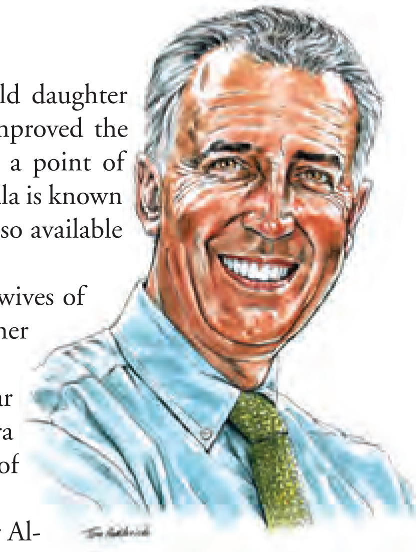
My Two Cents



This month I'd like to refrain from being critical ("grumpy" as my 13-year old daughter would say). Instead I'll talk about a 50-year-old lady who single-handedly improved the social life of the Middle Eastern country, Qatar, and in the process became a point of reference for the whole region. To the industry, this country on the Gulf peninsula is known for launching Al-Jazeera, the Arabic all-news international TV network (now also available in English). In Arabic, Al Jazeera means "the peninsula," a reference to Qatar.

This remarkable lady is Sheikha Mozah bint Nasser Al-Missned, the second of three wives of the 57-year old Sheihk Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani, Emir (prince) of Qatar (the other Emir's wives are his cousins, reportedly married for political reasons).

In 1995, Sheikha Mozah persuaded the Emir to fund her pet project: The Qatar Foundation for Education. This Foundation, which she chairs, launched Al Jazeera Children's Channel, an all-Arabic language TV service for children between the ages of three and 15, in 2005, after a gestational period of three years.

In order to avoid confusion with the older (founded in 1996), larger and more popular Al-Jazeera news service, the children's channel is often referred to as JCC. Officials at JCC are also quick to point out that there is no link between the two channels, since the news service is funded and operated by another foundation, directly under the auspices of Sheikh Hamad.

Currently, JCC covers 22 Arab countries on all platforms (cable, satellite, DTV and IPTV) and is carried on a non-exclusive basis in parts of Europe as well. The channel has no advertising and is billed as a "public mission." JCC produces 40 percent of its own programs and broadcasts 18.5 hours a day on weekdays and 19 hours on weekends. In addition, it has regional offices in Amman, Beirut, Cairo, Kuala Lumpur, Rabat and Paris.

With her Foundation and JCC, Sheikha Mozah has increased the education level of the young people in Qatar, especially among women who in the past were not allowed to participate in any social activities or services for the country. She's so revered in Qatar that the residents refer to her as "the first lady."

For her dedication to education, Sheikha Mozah has become the symbol of innovation and progress for the whole region. She has received many awards and honorary doctorates from several U.S. and U.K. universities and is UNESCO's special envoy for basic and high education.

Sheikha Mozah bint Nasser Al-Missned

Unlike many other monarchial wives in the Middle East, Sheikha Mozah has been a high-profile figure in Qatar's politics and international relations. In 2003, CBS' *60 Minutes* dedicated a full segment to her and the Emir. In 2007, Forbes named her one of the world's 100 most powerful women.

However, despite all her good intentions and drive, Sheikha Mozah could not have fulfilled her plans without the full support of Sheik Hamad. He's the Emir who abolished his country's Ministry of Information, which is still a source of censorship in Saudi Arabia and most other Arab nations. He pledged to let Al-Jazeera "report the news as they see it." In a 1997 speech, the Emir said, "I believe criticism can be a good thing, and some discomfort for government officials is a small price to pay for this new freedom."

The Emir rose to his position in 1995 after deposing his father, who was vacationing in Switzerland, in a bloodless coup. He married Sheikha Mozah in 1977 while she was attending Qatar University (from which she graduated in 1986 with a BA in Sociology). Of her background we know very little, apart from the fact that her father, Nasser Abdullah Al-Missned once lived in Al-Khor (north of Doha), where she was born. Nasser, who died in 2007, has been described as an "Arab nationalist" and a "modernizer." These elements are now found in his daughter's quest to develop a modern Arab-cultured and pan-Arab scientific and information infrastructure.

These aspects are not lost on JCC management, as shown by the channel's executive general manager Mahmoud Bouneb's conference at Mip-Junior, where he outlined the non-ideological nature of JCC and the channel's educational and entertaining values, which impressed participants such as Orlando Corradi of Italy's Mondo TV, who promptly suggested a co-production.

In conclusion, we can state that Qatar and its two television services have to be recognized by the international community as a driving force for progress and dialog both within the Arab world and with the West, which, too often, has been nearsighted in its criticism of Al-Jazeera, despite its independence and balanced reporting recognized by those who are not themselves politically radical fundamentalists, such as Fox News reporters and commentators.

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ILLUSTRATIONS
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FOUNDED IN 1981
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VIDEO AGE INTERNATIONAL (ISSN 0278-5013 USPS 601-230) IS PUBLISHED EIGHT TIMES A YEAR: JANUARY, FEBRUARY/MARCH, APRIL, MAY, JUNE/JULY, SEPTEMBER, OCTOBER AND NOVEMBER/DECEMBER. PLUS DAILIES BY TV TRADE MEDIA, INC. SINGLE COPY U.S.$9.75. YEARLY SUBSCRIPTION U.S.$45 (U.S., CANADA, MEXICO); U.S.$60 (U.K. AND EUROPE).

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